

The fourth principle comes out of the grim necessity for the courageous plunge into experience. In the philosophic East where the aspirant always draws apart from life there are few great spiritual figures of aid in the world. In the western world where man instinctively plunges with all his heart and soul into experience there is greater progress. The real salvation of the world has therefore come out of the West.

Imagination or conscious aspiration is the basis of all development.

#### CHAPTER IV THE ASPIRANT BECOMES AN ADULT

This chapter deals with the conquest in the ethers. The process is known as the building of the solar wedding garment, the solar body of the initiate or the bride.

The self begins this chapter by an invocation to itself. The self realizes that its usefulness is only as it can co-ordinate its lower vehicles.

The things with which this chapter deals are measured in terms of eternity. The reality which we gain in life is not measured by slowness or fastness or in any way by cycles of time. The relationship is not in the condition which exists but is in the beginning of things. The self goes back and realizes that what it is bringing forth is that which it had in mind at its inception. Initiation is the beginning. No matter how many times any one slips backward, once he has set his foot on the path it is necessary to go forward sooner or later. The inception is the relationship. It is superior to lives. The epoch is superior to time. Karma which is in the higher vehicles is superior to lives and to those things which are going forward in this life.

Difficulties are not for the purpose of punishment but for the purpose of development. God does not punish, but man punishes himself. Only with the consent of the ego can it be punished. Man is his own taskmaster.

The personal devil is the ego's permission for the subtraction of deity from itself, adding deity or power to karma.

Beauty is a power and a tremendous power, but for the production of beauty there must be ugliness. That type of human being that becomes most beautiful in full maturity is generally very unattractive in childhood and youth.

When a man is on the path, and as he becomes more and more advanced, he has no right to admit the superior development of any being embodied or disembodied. He dare not admit that any one is his superior. He must assert his own eternal perfect divinity. The first time he asserts it he brings down upon himself all the powers of heaven and hell, hence he must be ready absolutely or he will be broken.

When the ego comes to the point where it should assert its own divinity, then it finds it advisable to clear its karma. It is very dangerous to enter on anything of a high spiritual nature without first clearing away the fundamental karma.

The power of external evil is only by the permission and co-operation of the highest self of the person. If any one in his own individual experience is troubled by evil, he has only to thank himself for he alone is responsible. Unless he gives power to the invisible or has done so in some evil past, the invisible simply cannot touch him.

In this chapter we have in a sense the age-old example of the vacuum. The most difficult of all teaching in occultism, or that teaching that commonly is said to be esoteric and never taught in public, is embodied in the cycles. The cycles in principle are very simple yet very complex. They are simple but not easy. They are complex but not confused. In an unraveling of cycles it is required that one have a great grasp of contributing circumstances, otherwise he cannot reach in and get at the cycles. They are simple because the principles are simple and because the cycles have a tendency to go back to first, second and third cosmic emanations. The fundamental cycles are simple because they deal with cosmic simplicities. A cycle is a cross-section of life.

In the interrelation of cycles, the knack or key is always in deviation and distortion. It is the inception of a cycle that is the powerful point. Initiation is the getting out of a smaller circle into a larger one. A person can only get out of the smaller and into the larger at the point where the two circumferences coincide. Life consists of epicycles or a series of smaller circles inscribed in a larger circle. The vacuum is the point of balance. Sometimes it is a point of balance between co-ordinate cycles but usually rather those vacuums which represent the infinitesimal point of balance between a larger and smaller cycle. When everything is going perfectly smoothly for any one something usually happens. Fortunate is the man who dies at the apex of his career, otherwise he has a big fall. In the first place he is self-centered. He has not in the final stages of his conquest prepared the way for a greater one.

In the case of the self the revelation consists of two things. In the one place the aspirant gets into mischief because he has nothing with which to keep himself busy. Patting one's self on the back is as much a dissipation as the drinking of alcohol. When the vacuum comes, when that peace and pose come, there comes in that sense of greater things which can be done. That is what is meant in scriptures by listening.

It was necessary for the self at a certain stage to become unsettled. It is absolutely essential for one's growth that he be unsettled and worrying about something. Moods are necessary to an occultist, but they must be utilized.

When the aspirant first becomes unsettled he seeks to interpret his unsettled condition from the standpoint of sense. He applies his troubles to all of his senses but if his troubles are real the senses can give no understanding of them.

Every normal human being has a vision of what he wishes himself to become. The mantle is of course the self's own being. If one is introspective or if he views himself with approval or disapproval he will notice sooner or later that he sets himself up and cloaks himself in his ideals. He sees himself grow and gain experience. This is idealization temporarily clothed in consciousness. He sees himself as he should be. Should he be unfortunate enough to get a flash of these things that might become actualities, it may turn his head to some extent. Superiority complexes are absolutely health and necessary for growth.

First the self gets its great vision of itself growing. It lets its vision grow and expand to see where it will go. Here is the whole keynote of growth. "Let the flesh of the mantle remain in manifestation." The substance of one's dreams is what he eventually becomes.

There comes a time when it is necessary to stop the dream, destroy its form, erase it and stop its activity. When one dreams of the future and the dream begins to expand, stop and get busy. "Scatter its substance."

In this first dream or vision certain realities come to the aspirant concerning spiritual things which he can later check on.

The first test is not in one's dreams and not in one's normal growth but in one's ability to dream something and realize it. It is the dreaming of the dream and the executing of the dream that is the mark of progress. In connection with initiation there is first a sense of a definite need, or a dream of some sort. Then there comes the opportunity for putting the dream into realization and finally comes the test. The success of the test is the refusal to be diverted from the work started. What the work is makes no difference. When the test is met successfully there comes some definite key or knowledge which gives a perspective in the doing of the work and permits it to go forward under the direction of the brotherhoods. The sign of an initiate is the possession of this knowledge.

In the working out of the dream the aspirant must descend into his moods. He must descend into the substance of terrestrial realities. All his senses must become real to him.

Dissolute living is living without fear. Subconsciously in response to a wish for courageous expression for those things which are within, people yield to dissolute living. Mankind must learn not to fear the consequences of any expression. The lesson is the conquest of fear and the acquisition of discretion. If there is an impulse deep within, sooner or later it must be expressed. If it is not what the will of the person wants to express, the remedy lies in bringing it to the surface and fighting it out.

There are many kinds of teaching. Every one in life is a teacher. A person's experiences as they are externalized are teaching others.

Through all temptations one's consciousness should never be lost for a moment. One's own grossness must be faced.

In the latter part of this chapter we have the most destructive of all the sins of humanity or pride. In initiation there are certain codes and laws to which the initiate must conform. They have survived in the church through the sacraments and through the seven deadly sins and seven cardinal virtues associated with the sacraments. The sacrament which is associated with the solar key to knowledge is the sacrament of ordination. The element is air, the sin is pride and the virtue is charity. Charity is that willingness to help a person not in one's own way but to help him in his way. Charity is the most difficult of all the cardinal virtues, and pride the most dangerous of the deadly sins.

By its pride in itself the self immediately cuts off its own consciousness. By pride the initiate who had brought into contact the smaller and larger cycles so that he was traveling through both of them at the same time lost his balance and dropped back into the small cycle and had to work his way back gradually and laboriously to the pinnacle where he had been when pride first blinded him. Pride is the most dangerous of all things that any one can have on the path. That great ecstasy which lifts the soul to the heights can by only a little turning plunge it into the lowest depths.

At the end of the evolution of responsibility the aspirant purified his senses. One cannot purify his senses until he has obtained through them the requisite sensual knowledge.

The inner spark is never in the consciousness of the Self. The Self is not the ego but the ego is the divine reality behind.